



## CINCINNATI BENGALS

APRIL 28, 2023

NFL DRAFT — ROUND 2

**ZAC TAYLOR**  
**Head coach**  
**and**  
**LOU ANARUMO**  
**Defensive Coordinator**

Initial comments ...

Taylor: "DJ Turner, another Michigan DB to add to the mix here. We felt we needed to add depth to the secondary, and he's a guy who can come in and really compete at multiple roles for us, and provide depth outside and inside, and really like the intangibles he brings as well, so excited to welcome him to the mix."

**Did he come on the radar as you were watching Dax Hill last year?**

Taylor: "For me personally, no. Maybe some of the scouts would be able to say that. Typically, you're honed in on the guy you're watching when you're watching some of those DBs. Michigan has had some good ones, so there's a lot of them on the tape there."

**Did you talk to Dax Hill as part of the process at all?**

Taylor: "We just got off the phone with Dax (laughs) once the pick was official. I know (Charles) Burks had talked to Dax quite a bit and Jordan Kovacs and those guys. Again, we're not necessarily making all of those phone calls, but our guys in the building have been doing that."

**You always say you can never have too many edge rushers and corners, so how happy are you right now?**

Anarumo: "It's been great. You're adding at premium positions, and that's what it takes in this part of the draft is to get those players, because they seem to disappear pretty quick. I'm happy with yesterday, and now we get a corner with great speed, he's got good length, and he's played a lot of football, so I feel good about it."

**He's not the biggest guy in the world, but you look at him — the explosion, the testing. How important are those things when you're evaluating a corner who might not be 6'1-6'2'?**

Anarumo: "Yeah, you take the whole thing and put it together, and I think he's got a little bit a ways to go from a weight standpoint, but you can put some weight on him — you can't make him (run a) 4.2 (second 40-yard dash). The explosiveness that he has in his body, he's a tough guy, throws his body around, so it's not that he won't try to tackle or anything like that, so we feel like we're getting a complete player."

**How do you evaluate a pure outside guy compared to a guy who can play multiple roles?**

Anarumo: "I think there's a bunch of different ways to look at it. This guy I think does have some flexibility, but we'll certainly start him outside. He's done some of the inside work. Yesterday, we were talking about it — (he's played) over 600 snaps outside, so he's primarily an outside guy. But you get him in the building, you move him around, you see what we thought we saw on tape, and we think we got a guy who can do some different things, and we'll see when we get him here."

**Could he kind of be this year's Dax Hill?**

Anarumo: "We'll see. I don't know. We'll see how it all plays out."

**You lost two veterans in Vonn Bell and Jessie Bates III, but now you guys are building a very young, but talented and fast secondary. How do you think it's playing out so far?**

Anarumo: "It's playing out great, but we still have great veterans in that room — Chido (Awuzie), Mike Hilton, we brought in Nick (Scott), Mike Thomas is in there. We've got guys that have been around this league a long time to teach these guys our way, and the right way to do things. We'll miss those guys, but we've got great leadership and great players in that room still."

**Last night you talked about putting pressure on the quarterback, but this is the other half of that, right? In the current state of the NFL, defending the pass, you got to have both, right?**

Taylor: “No doubt. This guy is just competitive. Lou mentioned toughness, and that’s what you see, and that’s the perspective I look at from the offensive side of the ball. These DBs, the ones that compete and are tough, are valuable and he’s got the speed to match it. He’s played in a pro system before at Michigan, so we certainly value that as well. We think we’re adding the right guy to the mix here.”

**What was the pre-draft process with him like? Did you guys meet with him, and what was it like with him, specifically?**

Taylor: “I didn’t. Chuck Burks — there’s often times the position coach will meet with him and our scouts have met with him at a variety of different places. But face-to-face, in my office, I haven’t done that.”

**What is it about Michigan’s defense that’s similar to what you do and can help him transition over?**

Anarumo: “Just doing different coverages and things like that. There’s a lot of teams that do it, but they do some things that translate into our league. It plays a small role in the evaluation process. It’s not the only piece, but it certainly helps when you can see him do multiple things.”

**Does that fact that Dax already knows him help in terms of learning the playbook and learning the way around here?**

Anarumo: “I think they’ll know each other and Dax can give him the lay of the land a little bit, and if they’re out there at the same time, they’ve played together before, so it certainly helps. Again, it’s just a piece to the puzzle, but the familiarity they have with each other can only help.”

**You mentioned the 4.26 40 time. There’s guys that run that fast, but don’t necessarily play that fast. Did that line up for you, the play speed versus the 40 time?**

Anarumo: “Yeah, you see it. You see it on tape. It’s a good question, because you’ll see guys that have great time speed, but it doesn’t match their play speed and vice versa. But this guy can run, and you see it on tape. If he gets out of position, he can get back in it because of his speed. DBs in our league today, they’re going to get beat, they’re going to get out of position, and this guy has the recovery speed to get back in and maybe make a play on the ball, so that’s one of the things we really liked.”

**You mentioned the competitiveness, but does that include tackling? You’re obviously very fond of corners who can tackle well and already have a number of them here ...**

Anarumo: “Yeah, for sure. He will throw his body around, and he’s proven that certainly in the Big 10, and then in playoff games and in big games. You see his physicality, and he’s proven he can do it.”

**Will this be one of the faster secondaries you’ve coached?**

Anarumo: “I think again, when you look around the league at the weapons that so many teams have on offense and the speed that people have, you have to try to match it somehow. The faster guys we can get certainly is going to give us an advantage. We’re going to have to chase quarterbacks around and that means you’re going to have to cover a little bit longer. The faster we are, the better chance we have to get off the field.”

**How much of a benefit was it to see him go up against top competition in the Big 10?**

Anarumo: “It’s huge. I think when they come from big programs like this, they’re going to walk into the stadium and they’re going to be used to the place being full. They’re not going to flinch when it comes to that part of it. You like guys coming from bigger programs, and he’s from one of the biggest.”

**How much of a resemblance do you see with Cam Taylor-Britt?**

Anarumo: “They’re a little bit different. Both fast. Cam’s a little bit bigger of a guy, but they’re both very competitive, both want to win, both have great attitudes about football. They love the game. There are some similarities but the body type is a little bit different.”

**His arm length has been talked about. Does his quickness, speed make up for that?**

Anarumo: “I just think the way the guy moves, changes direction is really excellent. Not only the long part of it, but his short area, quickness stuff is really excellent. I think that helps offset some of the other things.”

**With all the defensive players taken lately, was this part of the plan, or coincidental?**

Taylor: “Coincidental is the way I put it. Going back to Duke (Tobin), the way that this roster has been built has allowed us the flexibility to take the best players available. This fits a need at corner. But at the same time, if we didn’t have someone there that we valued here in the second round, we wouldn’t have taken a corner. We would have gone with a different position. I just think that there’s not a lot of glaring holes here. It’s a lot of guys that are going to have an opportunity to get on the field, probably initially in depth roles and then work their way up. That’s ideally the way that you’re going into the draft. You’re not seeing a glaring hole at a starter role that you have to fill. These guys can come in the right way, learn the system and integrate themselves into the locker room, and start to earn more playing time. That’s a credit to how our scouting department has built this roster and allowed us to go into the draft. Maybe there’s an offensive player we liked but he gets snatched off and then there’s the next defensive player you got. I feel really good about how we’re built and how we continue to build it, and just the way that we’ve taken the best players available.”

### **Do you like getting all these young guys together at the same time, so they can grow together?**

Anarumo: "I think so. If they were the only ones left alone as younger players and they were coming to a building full of young players, then I think it might be a problem. But the veterans we have on our team and the way we go about our business, I think they're fortunate to come to us. The way our players treat them and will help them grow in this league along with the coaches, is second to none in my opinion. I think it's an advantage for us and an advantage for the young guys that come into our building."

### **Was all the trade movement before the pick a little stressful?**

Taylor: "No, you just never know what position it's about. It does seem like there's been more movement than normal, but that's just the way it goes. You just have to sit tight and hope the player that you want is there. DJ was there for us, and we're excited about it."

### **Is there a point today where you start looking for an offensive weapon?**

Taylor: "I think we're in a good position to keep taking the best player available here. Obviously, we've checked some boxes in some key spots. There's good players on the board that we had high up there that may still be around. I can't wait to get up there and see what the last five picks were. That's part of the fun of day two; seeing what's around and what other teams are doing."

### **Would you have looked at other cornerbacks if DJ was off the board?**

Taylor: "I won't go that far to say what our next need was, but there's still really good players that we liked there."

### **How vital is it to add both depth and talent that can play right away?**

Taylor: "If there are two positions you can't have enough players of over a 17-game season, its defensive line and corner. Anytime there's a good player there that can help, I don't think you're ever wrong picking up those two spots. We feel we got two high end players at those spots, but it never hurts you to take a guy who you think fits your system and what you want to do. You could argue a couple other spots, but those are two key spots to me that you're never wrong having valuable players."

### **What challenges does speed pose to a defense, from an offensive perspective?**

Taylor: "That's the tough part, when they can rush you like we can rush people, and there's speed in the back to cover it, you're not have some glaring opportunities to throw and catch. I feel good about how this thing is being built."

## **DJ TURNER**

### **Cornerback; Michigan**

#### **How excited are you to be joining your former Michigan teammate Daxton Hill and the Cincinnati Bengals?**

"It's great. Man, it's the best thing ever. It's going to be (like) the secondary we had back at Michigan. I already talked to him and everything. I can't wait."

#### **What was the pre-draft process like in talking with the Bengals? Did you feel like you had a good feeling after talking to them? Do you see yourself being on a team like that?**

"Yeah, I had a good formal meeting with them. I've got a good relationship with Dax. It all just worked out. I'm just excited to be part of the team."

#### **Coach Taylor mentioned that you had a lengthy visit with Bengals defensive backs coach Charles Burks first and talked to him a good amount during the process. What kind of questions did you have for him about what Cincinnati did in the secondary and similarities with what you ran in Michigan compared to what they do here?**

"I told him I'm a competitive corner — versatile — and he said he was going to put a lot on my plate and (asked if) I could get it done. I'm just excited for it. I feel I can fit in perfectly with the Bengals."

#### **They mentioned that you might be able to go inside or outside. What's the biggest key to be versatile at a high level?**

"Really, just knowing the playbook, knowing what's coming on. (I played) two different positions, so there's more to learn. So knowing both positions is huge, so I can go inside or outside on any down, in any situation, and know what's going on."

#### **Your 4.26 NFL Combine 40-yard dash time sticks out among other skills. How do you see yourself using that to take advantage of receivers on the field?**

"(I just) trust my feet and I know my speed, trust my technique — don't change anything I've been doing — and be comfortable and confident out there."

#### **What's the fastest 40 you've ever run?**

"Hands time? I'll say it's down around 4.22."

#### **How big of a deal was it for you to be the fastest guy at the combine? Was that a goal?**

“It definitely was. I was trying to go for the record, actually.”

**Have you watched many Bengals games over the years, and if so, what stuck out to you?**

“I have. (I noticed) they were winning. I was watching them all the time because Dax was out there (playing) last year. I was tuning in every week, so I’ve been watching them a lot recently.”

**When you were watching Dax, could you picture yourself or envision yourself playing on the Bengals?**

“Yeah, for sure. Now for sure. We joked around about it and was like, ‘Man, what if we get back together?’ And it actually happened.”

**When did you start joking around about that and have those conversations?**

“As soon as he got drafted last year. We were talking about it as ‘(I’m) next one out.’ It just so happened it happened.”

**What’s it like playing next to Dax on the field?**

“It was great. It was great. I mean, I said, ‘I’m going to be comfortable — I’ve been doing it for years.’ Yeah, now we get to do it at the top level.”

**You’re a little bit on the smaller side compared to some other cornerbacks. How will you try to compensate for that in the NFL? Do you think you might need to add weight or bulk up?**

“I’ve been on a lighter (side) my whole life, you know? I just trust my feet and speed — I know how to use them best. Nobody is faster than me, so I trust my technique and know my speed to use them to my advantage.”

**When you were watching Dax every week like you mentioned, what did you really like about the Bengals secondary? What stood out just watching them on TV or whenever you watch them?**

“(They were) aggressive. They’re aggressive. I can tell you it was communicating well and just know what’s going on. Being in the secondary, you’ve got to be confident and comfortable with each other, and I can tell that they were. Being in the secondary is a big deal. You can’t mess up back there. I could tell that they were on (the same page) back there.”

**The Bengals have Jamar Chase, Tee Higgins and Tyler Boyd among their receivers. How much are you looking forward to going up against those guys every day in practice?**

“Oh man, (it will be) great. I’m not going to see better, so it’s definitely a good thing I (get to go up against them in) practice. Practice makes the game easier.”

**Are there any cornerbacks you’ve watched that you’ve really tried to take things from and apply to your game?**

“I take a lot from everybody. There’s a good amount of cornerbacks I’ve actually watched — (I take something from) every corner, honestly. I always take something from every corner or safety — it doesn’t matter (who) — I always try to improve myself.”